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The North Atlantic Council met in Ministerial Session in Paris from 13th to 15th December, 1961. A thorough examination was made of the problems confronting the Alliance. The world-wide Communist threat to freedom, the problem of relations between the North Atlantic Alliance and the Soviet Bloc, in particular Berlin, were its central concern.

2. The aim of the peoples of the Atlantic Community is a stable order in which no man and no nation need fear for their existence, their liberty or their future. World peace cannot indefinitely rest on a precarious balance of mutual terror.

3. The Alliance seeks peace and disarmament. But this desire has consistently been frustrated by the Soviet Bloc. The Western Powers have presented a series of plans for general and complete disarmament. The Soviet Government has, however, so far refused to accept an effective and universally applicable system of international control, without which no nation could have confidence in a disarmament agreement. It envisages only verification of the arms destroyed, while rejecting control of the arms that remain. It is still the earnest hope of the Alliance that despite previous disappointments disarmament negotiations when resumed will yield useful results.

4. On the question of the abolition of nuclear tests, the Soviet Union has argued, evaded and obstructed for over three years, and through more than three hundred meetings. The Soviet Union, while professing to negotiate in good faith, must for many months past have been secretly preparing the longest series of nuclear tests yet carried out, culminating in the largest nuclear explosion yet known.

5. At the same time as the Soviet Union has been attempting to intimidate the peoples of the Free World with demonstrations of its nuclear strength, it has intensified its efforts to get the whole of Berlin at its mercy, to impose a discriminatory status on Germany, to perpetuate her divided state, and to break up the Atlantic Alliance. With these ultimate aims in mind, the USSR has artificially provoked a crisis over Berlin. Disregarding the obligations it has undertaken, the Soviet Union has cut Berlin in two. The walling-in of the people under its control has once more

demonstrated to the world the real nature of the Communist system and the irresistible attraction of a free society. Ministers expressed their sympathy with all those for whom the raising of this wall in Berlin has meant the separation of families and the denial of escape to freedom in the West. They also expressed their admiration of the courage and attachment to freedom of the people of Berlin, and reiterated their conviction that a just and peaceful solution of the problem of Germany, including Berlin, must be found on the basis of self-determination.

6. In the spirit of the agreed policy of the Alliance, the Ministers recalled their communiqué on Berlin of 16th December, 1958, and reaffirmed their determination to protect and defend the liberties of West Berlin, and ensure to its people the conditions for a free and prosperous life.

7. Established rights and obligations, solemnly confirmed in international agreements, cannot be extinguished unilaterally by the stroke of a pen - by the signature by the Soviet Government of a "peace treaty" with a régime which represents no one but its Soviet masters. The three Western Powers who bear special responsibilities for Berlin stand by their clear obligation to protect those who have put their trust in them. Acting in close co-operation with their NATO allies, they have taken the necessary measures to maintain their rights and to fulfil their obligations. Confirming their agreement on this policy, the members of the Alliance reaffirmed the responsibilities which each member state has assumed in regard to the security and welfare of Berlin and the maintenance of the position of the Three Powers in that city. They agreed to maintain close consultation on this question.

8. The Council heard statements on Berlin by the Foreign Ministers of the countries most directly concerned, and was informed of the intention to resume diplomatic contacts with the Soviet Union, in accordance with the aims which the West is pursuing for the maintenance of world peace and in the hope that these contacts might serve to determine whether a basis for negotiation could be found. Their colleagues approved the resumption of diplomatic contacts and expressed the hope that a negotiated settlement could be achieved. After full discussion of the situation, the Council agreed that the Alliance must continue on its resolute course, combining strength and firmness of purpose with a readiness to seek solutions by peaceful means.

9. Ministers noted the improvements made by member countries in their force contributions, particularly in response to the aggravation of the military threat arising from the deterioration in the Berlin situation. Units have been reinforced and their state of readiness enhanced. A mobile task force has been established. There have been advances in co-operative programmes for defence research and production, as well as in communications and infrastructure. Ministers also noted the progress made by the Council in its study of the long-term problems of improving the deterrent and defensive strength of the Alliance.

They instructed the Permanent Council to continue its examination of these urgent questions at an early date.

10. The North Atlantic Treaty Alliance threatens no one. In the world as it is today the Alliance must more than ever look to its defence, in view of the ever-increasing military capability of the Communist bloc and its manifest intention to expand its domination. So long as the Communist bloc is unwilling to agree to real disarmament, the countries of the Alliance must continue to strengthen their forces and modernise equipment so as to be able to deal with any form of attack. Only by an increased defence capability can the Alliance continue to deter Communist aggression. This will require still further dedication and effort from the NATO nations: but the clear and growing threat they face leaves no alternative.

11. In considering Civil Emergency Planning, particularly the protection of the civilian population, the Council recognised that such measures represented an essential element in the defence effort of NATO countries.

12. In the economic field the Council noted that a mission of high-ranking personalities had been set up in conformity with a decision taken at the last Ministerial Meeting to study ways and means of assisting the efforts of Greece and Turkey to speed up their development programmes and improve the living standards of their peoples. The mission will report to the Council before the end of April, 1962.

13. Ministers emphasised the importance for member states, not only of raising the living standards of their peoples, while maintaining an economic structure capable of supporting an adequate defence system, but also of expanding aid to the developing countries. The economies of the NATO countries are far stronger now than when the Alliance was formed. Ministers stressed the need to strengthen and deepen co-operation between all member countries in order to continue this progress.

14. The next Ministerial Meeting of the Council will be held at Athens from 3rd to 5th May, 1962.

NATO COMMUNIQUE ON BERLIN (16 Dec 1958)

1. The North Atlantic Council examined the question of Berlin.
2. The Council declares that no State has the right to withdraw unilaterally from its international engagements. It considers that the denunciation by the Soviet Union of the inter-allied agreements on Berlin can in no way deprive the other parties of their rights or relieve the Soviet Union of its obligations. Such methods destroy the mutual confidence between nations which is one of the foundations of peace.
3. The Council fully associates itself with the views expressed on the subject by the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the Federal Republic of Germany in their statement of 14th December.
4. The demands expressed by the Soviet Government have created a serious situation which must be faced with determination.
5. The Council recalls the responsibilities which each member state has assumed in regard to the security and welfare of Berlin, and the maintenance of the position of the Three Powers in that city. The member states of NATO could not approve a solution of the Berlin question which jeopardized the right of the three Western Powers to remain in Berlin as long as their responsibilities require it, and did not assure freedom of communication between that city and the free world. The Soviet Union would be responsible for any action which had the effect of hampering this free communication or endangering this freedom. The two million inhabitants of West Berlin have just reaffirmed to a free vote their overwhelming approval and support for that position.
6. The Council considers that the Berlin question can only be settled in the framework of an agreement with the USSR on Germany as a whole. It recalls that the Western Powers have repeatedly declared themselves ready to examine this problem, as well as those of European security and disarmament. They are still ready to discuss all these problems.

TRIPARTITE (Plus German communiques of Dec 14, 1958)

The Foreign Ministers of Great Britain, the United States, France, and the German Federal Republic (Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, Mr. Dulles, M. Couve de Murville, and Dr. von Brentano) issued a joint communique on Dec. 14, 1958, in Paris -- where they were attending the session of the North Atlantic Council -- after hearing a statement by Herr Willy Brandt, the Chief Burgomaster of West Berlin. The communique (1) affirmed the determination of the U.S., British and French governments "to maintain their position and their rights in Berlin, including the right of free access"; (2) declared that "they do not consider acceptable the unilateral repudiation by the Soviet Government of its obligations to the Governments of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States in relation to their presence in Berlin and the freedom of access to that city, or the substitution of the German authorities in the Soviet zone for the Soviet Government insofar as their rights are concerned"; and (3) stated that the three Western Governments would reply to the Soviet Notes after consulting their allies "during the forthcoming session of the Atlantic Council."

ARTICLE 6 OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY (4 April 1949)

For the purpose of Article 5 an armed attack on one or more of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France, on the occupation forces of any Party in Europe, on the islands under the jurisdiction of any Party in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer or on the vessels or aircraft in this area of any of the Parties.